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How to Choose Shipping Boxes



Pick the best box to send your items in.

Most of us squirrel away a few cardboard boxes to have handy when we need them. But depending on your intended use, you may want to purchase a box designed for that purpose.

The right type of box

Boxes for shipping come in multiple sizes and shapes, as well as various strengths. If you plan to mail something that is fragile and breakable, you will need a strong, thick box made from heavy, corrugated cardboard.

There are boxes specifically made to hold certain types of products. If you are shipping clothes, you will need a wardrobe box, which has a metal bar inserted at the top to hold clothing hangers.

Protect heavy items, such as computers or TVs, by packing them in their original boxes with their contour foam inserts. After you securely package an item, place the box within a special heavy, corrugated shipping box for double protection.

Be careful when packing

Even if you have the right type and size of box to ship your items, if you do not carefully pack and protect the contents, they may not arrive in one piece at the end of the trip. In addition to the traditional bubble wrap, there are other types of materials that provide protective cushioning.

You can choose from packing foam, corrugated packing pads, corner protectors and foam peanuts. If you are packing an item that is not breakable but you want to secure it against possible damage, an alternative is to tightly wrap the item in a heavy blanket. Another suggestion is to pad the item with pillows.

Where to get boxes

If you work in an office that has a copy machine, chances are the office buys reams of paper in bulk — and they come in sturdy boxes with lids. If there's time, ask whoever babysits the office copier to save you a few. If you need a box in a hurry, check out office supply stores or some of the larger retail chain stores, which may have an office supply department that stocks shipping boxes.

If you are [moving](#) or have many items to ship, you can probably get discounted rates for packing supplies, including boxes at bulk shipping supply stores, many of which are online. This will give you the opportunity to browse through the available products and do some comparison price shopping to get the best deal.

Regardless of the type of box that you decide to use, make sure you insure the package before shipment in case it gets lost or damaged during transit. Shipping service carriers also offer tracking so you can make sure the package makes it to its destination.

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